

MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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No. 4

Christoph Saur's Bible

The Bible held a large place in early American life and culture. As is well known, many of the pioneers who landed on American shores came here in search of a place where they might worship and serve God as they believed the Scriptures required of them. Invariably they brought copies of the Scriptures with them from their homeland. The German-speaking settlers who early came into Pennsylvania also brought with them printed Bibles. They reckoned these among their most treasured possessions. It was for their devotion to the truth of the Bible that they had endured persecution in the Old World and braved the long, perilous journey to a new land of promise in America. The Holy Scriptures were the light of life to them.

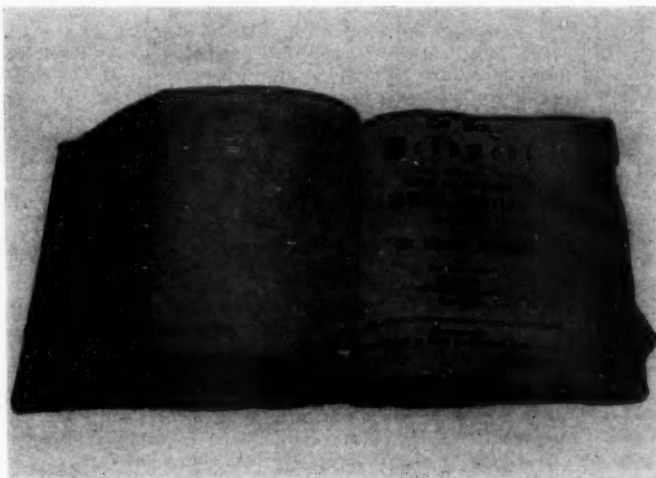
Numerous Mennonites and other persecuted religious refugees settled in Pennsylvania in the early part of the eighteenth century. Those who were of Swiss extraction brought with them in many cases copies of the *Froschauer Bible*, printed originally in Zurich, Switzerland, before 1530. A copy of one of these early Zurich Bibles is now deposited in the Historical Library at Goshen College, coming from the Frey family of Fulton county, Ohio. A copy of this same Bible brought to America by the first Yoder family, before 1715, is in the hands of a lady living in Reading, Pa.

An imported Bible which was a favorite among the Dunkers and other pietistic groups in early Pennsylvania, and was perhaps used some also by the Mennonites, was the *Berlenburg Bible*, printed 1726-1742, in eight volumes, a copy of which is in the Historical Library of the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottsdale, Pa. Out of this Bible, it is said, Christoph Saur took the text for several of the apocryphal books of the Old Testament; the rest of the text in the Bible he printed was taken from the thirty-fourth edition of Luther's Bible.

In the course of a generation after the first Mennonites settled in Pennsylvania there arose a demand for more Bibles than could be imported from abroad.

There was a thirst for the Word of God. The people did not wish the light that had led them to this land to be extinguished. Yet it was not easy to obtain stocks of Bibles and religious books from Germany and Switzerland for the needs of the pious, Bible-loving people of Pennsylvania.

Because of the need for religious reading matter among the German settlers, Christoph Saur of Germantown, himself an immigrant from Germany, became a pioneer printer and publisher in Pennsylvania. In 1738 he started issuing a German almanac which proved to be very popular. The next year he began publishing a religious newspaper in German, which en-



SAUR BIBLE, PRINTED 1743
Copy in Mennonite Historical Library, Scottsdale, Pa.

joyed a wide circulation. In 1742 Saur printed the first American edition of the earliest Mennonite hymnal, the *Ausbund* (see *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* of December, 1942).

As a printer and publisher Saur was in a true sense a pioneer. Materials and labor were scarce and expensive. His first press he had built himself. About 1740 he began preparations for the great task of printing the Bible, an undertaking he completed three years later. Therefore the year 1943 marks the bicentenary anniversary of the first edition of the famous Saur Bible. It was the first Bible printed in any European language on American soil. It was not, however, the first Bible to be printed in America. That honor belongs to the Bible printed for the Indians by John Elliott in 1663.

(turn to p. 4, col. 2)

History of the Forks Congregation

Alberta Augsburgur

(Concluded from September issue)

S. E. Weaver was ordained minister on June 17, 1904. He filled his place until 1916 when he asked to be relieved of the office as minister. Weaver preached his last sermon on June 4, 1916, and on July 23, 1916, his wish to be relieved was granted. This was a very touching hour for the congregation.

There were two ordinations on Good Friday, April 13, 1906. At that time D.

D. Miller was ordained to the office of bishop, and Joseph Y. Hooley was ordained as deacon.

Ernest E. Miller was the next member to be chosen from the Forks congregation as a minister. On December 9, 1917, he was ordained as a missionary to India by Bishop J. S. Shoemaker, but because of war conditions he did not sail for that field until 1920. Between the time of his ordination and the time he set sail for India, he spent about sixteen months in relief work in the Near East.

W. Wilbur Miller was ordained a minister of the Forks congregation on June 12, 1921. He served the church several years then united

with another branch of Mennonites and moved away.

From 1921 until 1932 D. D. Miller and J. Y. Hooley were the only two officials in charge of the congregation. The work became quite heavy for both Miller and Hooley. Since D. D. Miller was bishop of a few other congregations, —Kouts, Middlebury, Goshen College, and Maple Grove (Topeka)—at the same time, he often had to be away from the Forks to hold the communion services, baptisms, council meetings, and other special meetings in those congregations. This left only Deacon Hooley to preach the sermon and conduct the church service. Since Bishop Miller was sometimes absent for weeks at a time, this laid a heavy burden upon the deacon. It meant much work for Bishop Miller because he generally conducted the Forks church services

when he was at home. On Sunday afternoon, May 8, 1932, the congregation assembled for council meeting. They talked of ordaining a minister to help carry the heavy load that was borne by Bishop Miller and Deacon Hooley. The congregation decided in favor of ordaining a minister. That afternoon the congregation cast their votes for a minister, and on the evening of the same day Early Bontrager was chosen minister by lot. He is still serving as minister in the Forks congregation (1943).

A year or two ago J. Y. Hooley asked to be partly relieved from his duty. He was quite an old man, and was becoming feeble. The church considered this and on March 29, 1942, Malvin Miller was ordained deacon on the strength of the congregational vote; no lot was used. Therefore, at the present time the Forks has two deacons.

No one is quite certain of the exact date when the Sunday school was started. D. D. Miller, who was born November 10, 1864, left Indiana for Missouri with his family about 1870 when he was five years old. He cannot remember of any Sunday school before he left, but when his family returned three years later, he remembers that the Forks congregation then had a Sunday school. The Sunday school at first was taught in German, and it was held only during the summer months. An evergreen Sunday school was established in 1886. (An evergreen Sunday school is one that is held every Sunday, all the year round.) The Forks Sunday school is one that has an average attendance of about 200. The Sunday-school service starts at 9:30 a. m. and extends until 10:30. From 9:00 to 9:30 every Sunday morning the teachers of the Sunday school gather together for a teachers' meeting. Here they discuss the Sunday-school lesson for the day. The purpose of this meeting is to give the teachers themselves spiritual food and to prepare them to teach their classes better.

The young peoples' meeting was started about 1890. The meeting now regularly consists of congregational singing, prayer, reading of the Scripture, reciting Bible verses, essays, and talks. The program usually lasts for an hour. In 1943 the congregation is studying some phase of Christian Growth. The first subject studied was "Personal Evangelism."

The entertainments which were held at the homes years ago were the first step toward organizing a literary society. This started about 1910. No programs were given, but games, contests, and general entertainments were enjoyed. Refreshments were usually served following the entertainment. There was no regular time for these meetings, and they were continued during the winter months. Ethel Yoder writes, "Following these meetings a literary society was organized, and regular meetings were held at the Forks schoolhouse. Programs were given, and very often they were called 'Debates.' These meetings did not survive very long

because so many of the young people from surrounding communities refused to take part. Many even refused to enter the house during the program, but would come in during the social hour. It was simply 'a place to go' for many of them and the work of the literary society was left to a very few to carry on. There was a period of some years after these meetings began before the real literary society had its beginning." (*Indiana Literaries*, p. 145) The literary society was, however, finally organized in the fall of 1917. The name chosen for this society was "Vesphi-Delphian." Vesphi means evening, which gave the literary society the permission to meet in the evening. Delphian means a speaking oracle; thus, when anyone becomes a member of the Vesphi-Delphian society he is required to speak or serve. The society chose the motto: "We learn to do by doing." "The following were promoters of the Vesphi-Delphian literary society: Gladys Miller Rutt, Amos Bontrager, Ernest Miller, Ernest Stahley, Ervin Yoder, Millie Nusbaum Mishler, Oliver Bontrager, Carrie Bell Yoder, Elmer Yoder, Chris Baker, Nettie Yoder, Mabel Stahley, Celestia Bontrager Schrock, Raymond Eash, Elsie Miller, Nelson Birky, Clarence Miller, and Samuel Weaver, who did all in his power to assist the young people in organizing their society" (*Ibid.*, p. 146). The Forks literary society "meets every three weeks unless there is a conflict, and then the meeting is changed to the most convenient time." At first the literary meetings were held on Friday evening, but the time of meeting was later changed to Thursday evening because "many members attended the Shipshewana high school, and the literary did not want to conflict with programs given at the high school." (*Ibid.*, p. 147) The literary society still meets every three weeks on Thursday evening unless there is a conflict. There are at the present time about forty members in the Vesphi-Delphian society.

The Forks congregation has always been interested in missionary work. In fact, two of the very first Mennonite missionaries to go to India were from the Forks. They were Dr. and Mrs. W. B. Page who with J. A. Ressler set forth to the first Mennonite foreign missionary field in 1899. Ernest Miller from Forks and his wife spent two terms of service in India. Jay Hostetler and wife are serving on the India mission field at the present time, and are both from the Forks congregation. At one time no single Mennonite congregation in the world had as many missionaries on the foreign field as did the Forks. The Amasa Kauffman family is also from the Forks; they went to southern Texas to do mission work among the Mexicans. It might be interesting to note just what first caused Mr. and Mrs. Kauffman to consider working among the Mexicans. One Mission Sunday in November, S. C. Yoder president of Goshen College, and secretary of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Chari-

(turn to p. 3, col. 1)

Franconia Mennonite Historical Society

A very interesting and inspiring historical meeting has gone into history. On Thanksgiving Day, 1943, the thirteenth annual meeting of this Society was held at the Line Lexington meetinghouse. The interest in church history is apparently growing.

The new president of the Society, Quintus Leatherman, paid a touching tribute to his predecessor, John D. Souder, who had been one of the founders of the Society and was president to the time of his death September 14, 1942; (see BULLETIN of March, 1943). Bro. Souder's absence was noticeably felt at the meeting; we are glad that a young man is ready and willing to take the place which he left vacant.

The history of the local congregation at Line Lexington was discussed by one of its members, namely Frank Leatherman. It was interesting to learn that John F. Funk and the Lapp's were originally connected with this congregation. By changing our place of meeting yearly we get a review of historical data of the several congregations.

M. C. Lehman was the principal speaker at this meeting; he gave us firsthand information on the Mennonites in Europe as well as the prospects for the relief witness. Graphic illustrations were given of how the Mennonite church in Europe lost out on its peace witness and finally on its religious freedom necessarily. It was alarming to hear that while one hundred percent of the young men take military training in Europe because there is no alternative, that there should be thirty-eight percent of our young men in America who take the same course when the government has provided alternate service. The impression was left that if the church will not awaken in America our liberty too will be taken away.

These historical meetings direct us back to the sufferings of our forefathers, showing how tenaciously they held to their faith even unto death. —J. C. CLEMENS.

Goshen College Mennonite Historical Society

During the past year the Mennonite Historical Society held three public meetings, presenting various phases of Mennonite life and culture. The Society bound about one hundred volumes of periodicals and other materials of a similar nature. In addition to printing the four issues of the MENNONITE QUARTERLY REVIEW, the board of directors has completed arrangements for the printing of THE LIFE OF CONRAD GREBEL. The book is now in press. The work of the Society is made possible through: membership dues, sustaining memberships, book sales,

and special contributions for binding. During the past year, subscriptions and sales of back numbers of THE MENNONITE QUARTERLY REVIEW totaled \$593.51. The officers of the Society are: H. S. Bender, president; Guy F. Hershberger, vice-president; John Umble, secretary; John C. Wenger, treasurer; and Sanford C. Yoder, fifth member of the executive committee.
—JOHN UMBLE.

FORKS CONGREGATION

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ties, gave an address in the afternoon. His topic was on starting mission work among the Mexicans. His address was very inspiring, and it was this message which first caused both Kauffman and his wife to consider becoming missionaries to the Mexicans. The Kauffmans at present are still laboring among the Mexican people and trying to bring them to Christ.

The Forks congregation has not only sent missionaries to the field, but has also conducted mission Sunday schools. The present Middlebury congregation is an outgrowth of the Forks, some of the Forks members having started it. Forks furnished the deacons and ministers for this new congregation and D. D. Miller served as the bishop. At first the ministers used to hold the meeting at the Forks in the morning, and in the afternoon they would hold meetings at Middlebury. For a short time the Forks also conducted a mission Sunday school at Wilson; they also had one near White Pigeon, Michigan, for a short while. Then for about two or three summers the Forks had a mission Sunday school at Fawn River, Michigan. Here, too, they held a worship service once a month.

Another missionary activity of the congregation is the sister's sewing circle. Until 1939 or 1940 the sewing was held in the homes of the sisters who belonged to the circle. In 1939 or 1940 the church purchased the adjoining property and remodeled the house for a sewing circle building. The women sew for the poor in the congregation, for orphans' homes, missions; and during the present World War they are also making kits for the young men of the congregation who are in Civilian Public Service camps.

Bishop D. D. Miller has for many years been connected with the General Mission Board at Elkhart, Indiana, serving as president, treasurer, and financial agent.

The people of the Forks congregation have had an active interest in missionary activities for many years. Those who are not able to go as workers on the mission fields give of their means to further the gospel. The Forks congregation has an active Sunday school, literary society, young people's meeting, and shows fine missionary interest. The congregation today consists of about 270 members. The people are genuinely interested in the growth and spiritual life of their church. It is the prayer and purpose of the members to go forth and witness to the world and lead souls into the kingdom of Christ.

John Calvin and the Swiss Brethren

John C. Wenger

(concluded from September issue)

5. Baptism

The Swiss Brethren would have been in full agreement with the opening sentence of Calvin's chapter on Baptism, which reads as follows: "Baptism is a sign of initiation, by which we are admitted into the society of the church, in order that, being incorporated into Christ, we may be numbered among the children of God" (IV, xv, 1). A little later in the same chapter he adds, "Thus we are promised, first, the gratuitous remission of sins, and imputation of righteousness; and, secondly, the grace of the Holy Spirit to reform us to newness of life" (IV, xv, 5).

Again he speaks as follows, "Baptism also serves for our confession before men. For it is a mark by which we openly profess our desire to be numbered among the people of God, by which we testify our agreement with all Christians in the worship of one God, and in one religion, and by which we make a public declaration of our faith. . . ." (IV, xv, 13). And after commenting on God's use of external means, Calvin goes so far as to say, "Nevertheless, from this sacrament, as from all others, we obtain nothing except what we receive by faith" (IV, xv, 15). To all these statements Conrad Grebel could have borne testimony.

In chapter 16 of Book IV Calvin attempts a refutation of the Anabaptists, although he knew very little about them. How does he justify the baptism of infants? His first argument is that baptism corresponds to circumcision, which sign was in the Old Testament performed on infants. He also holds that the command of Jesus, to permit the children to come to Him, justifies infant baptism. But when Calvin tries to answer the Anabaptists he runs into serious difficulty. He himself had stated that "infants are not excluded from the kingdom of heaven, who happen to die before they had the privilege of baptism" (IV, xv, 22). The reader is hardly prepared for his harsh statement regarding the opponents of infant baptism, "Finally, we ought to be alarmed by the vengeance which God threatens to inflict, if any one disdains to mark his son with the symbol of the covenant; for the contempt of that symbol involves the rejection and abjuration of the grace which it presents" (IV, xvi, 9).

Calvin becomes even more abusive when he says, "Moreover, they sentence all infants to eternal death, by denying them baptism, which, according to their own confession, is necessary to salvation" (IV, xvi, 26). Finally, he speaks of Satan making "great exertions in opposition to infant baptism" (IV, xvi, 32). The latter part of chapter 16 contains a

lengthy reply to Servetus whom he mistakenly labels as "one of the most eminent of the Anabaptists, and even the chief glory of that sect" (IV, xvi, 31). It is difficult for an unbiased reader to harmonize Calvin's general statements on baptism with his defense of infant baptism. Professor Karl Barth of Basel is aware of Calvin's inconsistency on this point.

6. The Lord's Supper

As was noted above in the discussion on holiness, Calvin accused the Swiss Brethren of at least approaching perfectionism. Calvin did believe in church discipline, to be sure, but he did not approve of the attitude and the practice of the Brethren. "Cyprian," he says, "has excellently remarked, 'Although tares, or impure vessels, are found in the church, yet this is not a reason why we should withdraw from it. It only behoves us to labor that we may be the wheat, and to use our utmost endeavors and exertions, that we may be vessels of gold or of silver. But to break in pieces the vessels of earth belongs to the Lord alone, to whom a rod of iron is also given. Nor let any one arrogate to himself what is exclusively the province of the Son of God, by pretending to fan the floor, clear away the chaff, and separate all the tares by the judgment of man. This is proud obstinacy, and sacrilegious presumption, originating in a corrupt frenzy'" (IV, i, 19).

In referring to Paul's command not to eat with offensive sinners, Calvin comments on the Anabaptist attitude in these words: "Here they exclaim, If it be not lawful to eat common bread with him, how can it be lawful to unite with him in eating the bread of the Lord? . . . I admit that it is the duty of a pious man to withdraw himself from all private intimacy with the wicked, and not to involve himself in any voluntary connection with them. But it is one thing to avoid familiar intercourse with the wicked; and another thing, from hatred of them, to renounce the communion of the church. And persons who deem it sacrilege to participate with them the bread of the Lord, are in this respect far more rigid than Paul" (IV, i, 15). Calvin adds that "we generally find that excessive severity is more owing to pride and haughtiness . . . than to true holiness . . ." (IV, i, 16). The Swiss Brethren, on the other hand, would have been in agreement with Calvin's assertion that the church as a whole decides on who ought to be admitted into and expelled from the church (cf. IV, i, 15).

7. Other Points

In discussing predestination, of which, by the way, Calvin says, "It is an awful decree, I confess" (IV, iii, 7), he lists the sects with which he is concerned as Pelagians, Manichaeans, Anabaptists, and Epicureans (III, xxiii, 8).

Calvin mentions in one place that in the ancient church "the faithful kissed each other" (IV, v, 15) before observing the
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RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The Gospel Under the Southern Cross. By J. W. SHANK, T. K. HERSHEY, D. PARKE LANTZ, NELSON LITWILLER, ELVIN SNYDER, L. S. WEBER, et. al. Scottsdale, Pa., 1943. Pp. XVI, 272. Illustrated. Price, \$1.50.

Twenty-five years of service in mission work rehearsed in detail by the laborers themselves is not only an inspiration to them, but stirs any believer regardless of his field of labor. Paul stepped out with courage in future service by recalling God's providence in his behalf in the past (II Cor. 4:4-18).

The book is compiled in a way that it will be an asset to any church or Sunday-school library. The field rehearsed; the work undertaken; the problems and progress noted; the biographical sketches of the workers with the accompanying photographs, illustrations, maps, and pictures, all add to the value and interest of this book.

The geographical location of the field of work, being in the same latitude as the home base, only in the southern hemisphere with a reversed or opposite succession of seasons, is at once striking and interesting. Climatic conditions figured in when the field was finally chosen after deliberating from the time of J. W. Shank's investigating tour, 1911-1912, to the opening of the work in 1917. The description of this country is good reading for all, especially for the young.

The history of the native people is interesting and useful to evaluate the progress of our workers in this field; there is no better way to arouse the interest of the church in mission work than to present to it the needs of a people with whom we are sharing our labors. The successes and failures of the workers are graphically recounted; this also adds missionary knowledge to all interested.

The biographical sketches in the closing chapters of this volume are valuable data and a needed part of the history of the church. Church history needs encouragement, and there is no surer prediction of the future than the history of the past. This book clearly sets forth the happenings in the Lord's work in South America for the past twenty-five years and points ahead to what may be expected of the same Lord, if He pleases to tarry. A fitting introduction by S. C. Yoder, secretary of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, sets forth this work in South America in a glowing way. He himself visited that country and the mission field and is the author of another recent book, entitled *Down South America Way*.

The Gospel Under the Southern Cross is deserving of a wide circulation.—J. C. Clemens.

CHRISTOPH SAUR'S BIBLE

(concluded from p. 1, col. 2)

There was no printing of English Bibles in America until much later.

Regarding the printing of Saur's first edition, Margaret T. Hills, in *Bible Society Record* (Oct., 1943), says this:

A new font of type was contributed by Dr. Heinrich Ehrenfried Luther, head of a famous type foundry at Frankfurt-am-Main. The press seems to have been secured from another printer, who lacked Saur's ability to get things done. The paper had been requested from a religious organization in England; but he may have used American paper. The ink he made himself from a formula of his own devising. The text followed was that of one of the Luther editions printed at Halle. Saur's first edition consisted of 1,200 copies. The fat, square volume is usually bound in stout, brown calfskin over oak boards, sometimes with a little simple tooling. The title page is strikingly printed in red and black, and charming cherubs appear at the end of the Old Testament and of the New. The volumes were sold at eighteen shillings, which is about \$2.50; but, announced Christopher Saur,—"to the poor and needy we have no price." In his preface Saur says the book contains no notes or explanations, because, "firstly, . . . by means of Scripture parallelisms, one phrase frequently illuminates another in the spiritual sense; secondly, because it is certain that to him who reads the Scriptures with an upright heart, the Holy Spirit in the heart reveals his true meaning by the reading itself; and according as every believer himself undergoes such an experience in himself, individually, so one believes assuredly that the time nears when the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord (Isa. 11:9), and there shall be no need that brother teach brother and admonish him to know the Lord (Jer. 31:34)."

The first edition of this Bible met the demand for twenty years. Between the years 1745 and 1775 a series of German New Testaments was issued from the Saur press. The elderly Saur died in 1758, and his son Christoph, Jr., who was an elder of the Church of the Brethren, carried on the press. He brought out a second edition (2,000 copies) of German Bibles in 1763, and a third edition (3,000 copies) in 1776. Saur was opposed to war and on conscientious grounds declined to take the oath of allegiance to the state of Pennsylvania when the War for Independence broke out, as did many other nonresistant people of the province. Because of the stand he took Saur's goods were confiscated and sold at auction, including many unbound copies of his last edition of the Bible.

As already mentioned, many Mennonites used and preferred the Froschauer Bible when they came to America. With Saur's printing of Luther's text in his Bibles, the Mennonites too came to use Luther's version. Many Mennonite homes must have acquired and used copies of the Bibles printed and distributed by Saur. A footnote in John C. Wenger's *History of the Franconia Mennonites* (p. 323)

conveys the information that twelve Franconia Mennonite meetinghouses still have copies of the famous Saur Bibles in their pulpits; three of them have the 1743 edition, three have the 1763 edition, and six have the 1776 edition. One other Saur Bible (1763) from that district is now deposited in Goshen College Library.

Two copies of the Saur Bible have lately been presented to the Historical Library of the Mennonite Publishing House. A copy of the first edition (1743) came from Mrs. Mary A. Allen of Louisville, Ohio (see cut). The opening title page and parts of the first leaves of the Old Testament are unfortunately missing. This Bible once belonged to Mrs. Allen's father, William Burkholder. He had received it from his father, George Burkholder, whose father had brought it from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, to Ohio about the year 1807.

The other Saur Bible recently received by the Mennonite Publishing House is a copy of the second edition (1763), and was presented by Mrs. James Stoner of Scottsdale, Pa. —EDWARD YODER.

JOHN CALVIN AND THE SWISS BRETHREN

(concluded from p. 3, col. 3)

Lord's Supper, but he does not refer to any such practice among the Swiss Brethren. Similarly, he refers to the teaching of James on anointing with oil, but in so doing he is refuting Roman Catholics, not Swiss Brethren (IV, xix, 19). Calvin also refers to the woman's veil (I Corinthians 11:5) but not in connection with the Anabaptists. Rather he assumes that women shall be veiled whenever they appear in public (IV, x, 29 and 31).

It is evident that there were two major theological differences between Calvin and the Swiss Brethren. The first related to the church, its membership and function; the second concerned the Christian's ultimate source of authority, i.e., his relation to the two covenants, Old and New.

Historical Committee of Mennonite General Conference

Treasurer's Report

For period, Dec. 23, 1941 to Dec. 31, 1943

Receipts: Amount brought forward, \$39.15; Membership dues paid for the Mennonite Historical Association, \$189.00; Bulletin copies sold, \$7.50; Donations from the Mennonite Publication Board, \$100.00; Other donations, \$8.00. Total receipts: \$343.65.

Disbursements: For publishing eight issues of MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN, \$164.65; For postage, express, etc., \$16.97; For Library building fund (Goshen College), \$9.40; For work done in Mennonite Archives, \$20.00. Total amount paid out, \$211.02.

Balance in the treasury (December 31, 1943), \$132.63.

Respectfully submitted, Edward Yoder, Treasurer.

